

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7199
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAPE TOWN 860

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, SHUM, WA, SF, TZ
SUBJECT: NAMIBIA: SUGGESTED EFFORTS TO BRING ABOUT THE RELEASE
OF TOVIO AND SHIPANGA

1. IN EXAMINING WAYS IN WHICH SWAPO'S INTRANSIGENCE ON
THE WESTERN PROPOSAL MIGHT BE MODERATED, WE WOULD LIKE TO
PROPOSE FOR CONSIDERATION AN EFFORT TO SECURE THE RELEASE
NOW OF SHIPANGA AND TOVIO.

2. THE PROSPECTIVE CONSEQUENCES OF THE RELEASE OF SHIPANGA
AND TOVIO ARE UNCERTAIN AND MIXED. THE PARTIES CONCERNED--
TANZANIA AND THE SAG--MAY NOT FOR THAT REASON WISH TO VENTURE
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SUCH A MOVE AT THIS TIME. THERE ARE RISKS FROM OUR POINT OF
VIEW AS WELL.

3. THE FREEING OF TOVIO BY THE SAG--OR AT LEAST HIS
TRANSFER NOW TO NAMIBIA WITH THE IMPLICATION HIS RELEASE
MAY SOON BE FORTHCOMING--WOULD BE A GESTURE OF SOUTH
AFRICAN GOOD FAITH, WOULD CONVEY A SENSE OF MOVEMENT, AND

WOULD TEND TO HIGHLIGHT SWAPO'S INTRANSIGENCE. WHAT TOVIO WOULD DO UPON RELEASE IS UNPREDICTABLE. HE IS REPORTEDLY A MAN OF STRONG RELIGIOUS CONVICTION AND HE HAS BEEN INCARCERATED SINCE BEFORE SWAPO BECAME A GUERRILLA ORGANIZATION WITH GROWING TIES TO THE SOVIETS. HE COULD CONCEIVABLY OPT FOR THE PEACEFUL ALTERNATIVE OFFERED BY THE WESTERN PROPOSAL. HE COULD, HOWEVER, SEE THAT COURSE AS PLAYING THE SOUTH AFRICAN GAME AND, EMBITTERED BY HIS ROBBER ISLAND EXPERIENCE, HE MIGHT JOIN NUJOMA OR AT LEAST SUPPORT THE LATTER'S HARD LINE. OR HE MIGHT CHOOSE TO REMAIN SILENT AND INACTIVE FOR THE PRESENT.

4. IT IS UNKNOWN TO US WHETHER THE SAG CONTEMPLATES RELEASING TOVIO SHOULD THE WESTERN PROPOSAL FAIL TO WIN SWAPO ENDORSEMENT. THEIR THINKING MAY NOT HAVE GONE THAT FAR AS YET. WE MIGHT WELL FIND THAT, IN ANY EVENT, THE SOUTH AFRICANS WOULD INSIST ON THE QUID PRO QUO OF SHIPANGA'S RELEASE. WE HAVE IN THE PAST REJECTED SUCH LINKAGE AND IT IS EXCLUDED FROM THE PROPOSAL. THAT DOES NOT, HOWEVER, PREVENT US FROM SEEKING THE NEAR SIMULTANEOUS RELEASE OF BOTH.

5. WE ARE UNCERTAIN WHETHER NYERERE IS NOW AS INCLINED TO RELEASE SHIPANGA AS HE APPARENTLY WAS EARLIER THIS YEAR. IF SHIPANGA WERE FREED, EVEN WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT HE NOT RETURN TO NAMIBIA FOR THE TIME BEING, IT WOULD BE A STRONG SIGNAL TO
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NUJOMA THAT FRONT LINE--OR AT LEAST TANZANIAN--PATIENCE IS WEARING THIN. WE CANNOT BE CERTAIN WHAT SHIPANGA WOULD DO IF FREED. THOUGH IT IS, OF COURSE, UNLIKELY HE WOULD CHOOSE TO REJOIN NUJOMA, RATHER THAN FOLLOW THE SOUTH AFRICAN ROUTE OF ENDORSING OUR PROPOSAL, HE COULD REJECT IT AND ADVOCATE THE TOUGH STANCE.

6. THE WORST CASE SCENARIO, AS WE SEE IT, WOULD BE TOVIO JOINING NUJOMA AND SHIPANGA REMAINING ALOOF BUT ALSO IN OPPOSITION TO THE WESTERN PROPOSAL. OUR SITUATION IN THIS CASE WOULD BE MUCH AS IT IS TODAY. THERE IS REASON TO EXPECT, HOWEVER, THAT THE SITUATION WOULD NOT REMAIN STABLE, DISSENSION WITHIN SWAPO WOULD TEND TO COME TO THE FOREFRONT, AND AFRICAN EXASPERATION WITH SWAPO WOULD TEND TO GROW.

7. AGAINST THE WORST CASE SITUATION WE WOULD WANT TO WEIGH THE POSSIBILITY THAT TOVIO OR SHIPANGA OR BOTH WOULD OPPOSE NUJOMA AND ENDORSE THE WESTERN PROPOSAL.

8. EVEN IF EARLY RELEASE OF TOVIO AND/OR SHIPANGA WERE TO PROVE OUT OF THE QUESTION, SECURING TANZANIAN AND SAG AGREEMENT TO CONSIDER THE POSSIBILITY (AND IN THE SAG'S

CASE TO MOVE TOVIO TO NAMIBIA), MIGHT IN ITSELF HAVE A
BENEFICIAL EFFECT ON NUJOMA AND INDUCE HIM TO MODIFY HIS
POSITION. WE WOULD WANT TO ASSURE THAT THE SAG DOES NOT
INTERPRET OUR URGING THIS COURSE AS AN ENCOURAGEMENT FOR
SOUTH AFRICA TO PROCEED UNILATERALLY WITH THE TRANSITION
TO INDEPENDENCE.
NELSON

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